

PCTWORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 6 : C08F 6/24, 114/06	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 96/18659 (43) International Publication Date: 20 June 1996 (20.06.96)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/IT95/00209 (22) International Filing Date: 6 December 1995 (06.12.95) (30) Priority Data: UD94A000199 12 December 1994 (12.12.94) IT UD94A000200 12 December 1994 (12.12.94) IT (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): C.I.R.S. S.P.A. [IT/IT]; Colafonda - Cavanella Po, I-45010 Rovigo (IT). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): CARLIN, Francesco [IT/IT]; Colafonda - Cavanella Po, I-45010 Rovigo (IT). CARLIN, Paolo [IT/IT]; Colafonda - Cavanella Po, I-45010 Rovigo (IT). (74) Agent: D'AGOSTINI, Giovanni; D'Agostini Organizzazione, Via G. Giusti, 17, I-33100 Udine (IT).		(81) Designated States: BR, CA, CN, HU, JP, KR, MX, NO, SK, US, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: METHOD AND PLANT FOR THE PRODUCTION OF POLYVINYLCHLORIDE IN AQUEOUS SUSPENSION WITH RECOVERY OF REFLUXES (57) Abstract Method for Polyvinylchloride production in aqueous suspension with recovery of refluxes, that provides for the use of a plant for Polyvinylchloride production that has at least one reactor to transform the vinyl chloride monomer into Polyvinylchloride in aqueous suspension and vinyl chloride monomer wastes into the gaseous state, and to separate at least one part of the water from the aqueous Polyvinylchloride suspension, as reflux water, characterized by the fact that said reflux water is recycled in the reactor(s) in polymerization phase.		

1 DESCRIPTION
2 METHOD AND PLANT FOR THE PRODUCTION OF
3 POLYVINYLCHLORIDE IN AQUEOUS SUSPENSION WITH
4 RECOVERY OF REFLUXES

5 Technical Field

6 This invention has for object a method and plant for the
7 production of Polyvinylchloride in aqueous suspension with reflux
8 recovery.

9 Background Art

10 At the present state of the art the production system of
11 Polyvinylchloride in aqueous suspension is already known.

12 This method consists of polymerizing in a discontinuous way,
13 the vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), dispersed in water, by the use of
14 suspension agents and the use of catalysts of the oleosoluble peroxide
15 type in the VCM itself.

16 This polymerizing reaction is carried out in reactors of
17 different sizes.

18 These reactors are in substance containers resistant to pressure
19 and provided with agitators that keep the contents in agitation during
20 reaction and as such in suspension.

21 The same reactors are provided with cooling or heating jacket
22 for adjusting and/or maintaining the temperature at optimal reaction
23 conditions.

24 Big size reactors of e.g. 80-130 cubic metres, are similarly
25 provided with a condenser placed on the upper side of the reactor that
26 allows to increase in a considerable way the exchange surface of the
27 reactor itself, increasing in this way its productive capacity, by
28 removal of the large amount of the exothermic reaction heat that is

1 set free during the polymerizing itself.

2 The reaction occurs under constant pressure.

3 At the end of the reaction, a gradual drop in pressure is
4 observed that indicates that the loaded VCM has changed into solid
5 Polyvinylchloride (PVCS) in aqueous suspension in one part,
6 wherefore the aqueous suspension still contains the un-reacted vinyl
7 chloride monomer (VCM).

8 The percentage of vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) that remains
9 embodied in the aqueous suspension can vary between 8% and 20% in
10 weight of the total amount initially loaded, depending on technologies
11 and load formulations adopted.

12 The entire suspension is then submitted to a degasing, by
13 opening a gas exit system from the reactor.

14 This operation completely sets free the aqueous suspension of
15 the vinyl chloride monomer (VCM), because at this temperature
16 (solution still hot), the whole monomer is in the gaseous state.

17 The aqueous suspension therefore without monomer and with
18 the Polyvinylchloride (PVCS) in suspension in the form of solid
19 particles, is then discharged by the reactor and submitted to filtration
20 or centrifugation to remove the greatest possible amount of water (60-
21 70% in weight of the entire suspension) from the polymer.

22 The polymer is then sent to a desiccation plant where it is
23 completely dried for marketing.

24 The drawbacks that result are:

25 - the necessity to liquify the gaseous monomer coming from the
26 reactor for its complete recovery and reloading in the subsequent
27 reactions with high costs and above all with serious danger of
28 immission into the external atmosphere with highly toxic and

1 polluting effects.

2 - the reflux water resulting from the separation of Polyvinylchloride
3 (PVCS), still contains Polyvinylchloride wastes (PVCS) that are also
4 highly pollutant.

5 If one considers that in order to produce 1 ton of PVCS,
6 approximately 3 tons of water are normally used, one understands the
7 large amount of such environmental pollution, considering that on
8 average about 1000 p.p.m. of PVCS remain in the reflux waters, in
9 micropolymer form not easily separable from the water itself,
10 precisely because the particles in solution are minute in size.

11

12 The most obvious thought would be that of re-using the reflux
13 water in a subsequent reaction, but this is not possible because the
14 micropolymers contained in it would generate centers of
15 polymerization that would irreparably damage the quality of the
16 finished product.

17 Therefore these reflux waters are regularly sent to very
18 expensive industrial depuration plants with further environmental
19 pollution problems for the elimination of separate products.

20 Even though the waters have been purified, they cannot be re-
21 used in new reloads because even after the depuration processes the
22 necessary degree of purity is not reached.

23 For the gas one is obliged to use expensive liquefaction and
24 recovery plants for the subsequent re-use.

25 Furthermore it is known that one can have difficult moments
26 during reactions, necessity of immediate pressure discharge and/or
27 risk and/or danger of explosion.

28 The aim of the present invention is to eliminate the above-

1 mentioned drawbacks.

2 In particular, attention is drawn on the possibility of recovery
3 of reflux waters directly in the reactor and surprisingly it was found
4 that, if the reflux waters are added after the reaction has started and
5 after the microparticles of PVCS have begun their formation
6 (therefore, already structured genetically), there is no damage to the
7 reaction and no qualitative damaging of the product, probably because
8 the microparticles of the reflux waters are no longer the genetic basis
9 of the reaction but particles that will unite with the previous ones
10 already codified and therefore without introducing substantial
11 alterations in them.

12 In this way the problem of recovery of reflux waters is
13 completely solved, because they are re-used in the continuous process,
14 without ever having discharged on the outside.

15 As claimed the problem is solved therefore, by the use of a plant
16 for Polyvinylchloride production that has at least one reactor to
17 transform the vinyl chloride monomer into Polyvinylchloride in
18 aqueous suspension and vinyl chloride monomer wastes to the gaseous
19 state, and to separate at least one part of the water from the aqueous
20 Polyvinylchloride suspension, as reflux water, characterized by the
21 fact that the said reflux water is loaded in polymerization reactors,
22 during the polymerization process.

23 This technique of adding reflux waters does not damage the
24 polymerization process inasmuch as the main chemo-physical and
25 morphologic characteristics of formation of PVCS particles have
26 already been formed in the presence of water and pure VCM monomer.

27 Advantageously the plant has at least two reactors
28 interconnected with each other to operate in a continuous way.

1 In this way during a process that could advantageously proceed
2 without continuity, firstly starting one reactor and then the other,
3 staggered from the first,:

4 - the toxic gases can be recovered, discharging them from one reactor
5 to the other;

6 - load at the right moment in one reactor and then the other, the
7 reflux waters from the first on the second and vice versa from the
8 second on the first.

9 The interconnection can be carried out by a third reactor or
10 interconnection container, that acts as a lung for a total continuity of
11 plants.

12 Advantageously the connection between the two reactors can be
13 made by means of a container or even an intermediate reactor or third
14 reactor that advantageously is smaller for the reasons that will be
15 hereafter explained.

16 In this way the third reactor or interconnection container, can
17 act as a lung with the reflux gaseous and liquids of the other two, with
18 transfer at the right moment in the process phases, or of possible
19 emergency, from one to the other and this allows the continuity of the
20 process without recovery units.

21 Advantageously the interconnection container or third reactor
22 can act as a lung for the gaseous and liquid refluxes of one or the
23 other of the two main reactors, with transfer at the right moment in
24 the process phases, or of possible emergency, from one to the other
25 and this allows the continuity of the process without recovery units.

26 The plant operates in a way that the vinyl chlorinated monomer
27 not reacted in one of the two reactors, after liquefaction, is
28 transferred to the second reactor, already in reaction phase.

1 Said reflux water is loaded into the main polymerizing reactors,
2 during the polymerizing process.

3 This technique of reflux water addition does not damage the
4 process of polymerizing inasmuch the main chemical-physical and
5 morphologic characteristics of formation of the PVCS particles have
6 already been formed in presence of pure water and monomer VCM.

7 Advantageously the two reactors are started preferably
8 staggered from 30 to 70% of the total reaction time.

9 In this way the degasing phase of a reactor coincides with the
10 central phase of polymerization of the second reactor.

11 A further advantage results from the fact that in case of serious
12 emergency the interconnection container or third reactor can collect
13 the vinyl chloride monomer condensates, mix them with the inhibitor
14 and supply the operator a precious elongation of handling and
15 decision times before the opening of the safety valves for excess of
16 internal pressure.

17 Process:

18 At the beginning of the loading the main reactor is loaded with
19 a smaller amount of water when compared to the traditional
20 formulations, in order to absolutely provide a necessity of further
21 water addition during the process.

22 Advantageously the lack of water in load will be lower than
23 40%-70% preferably 60% of the initial load for selfsufficiency.

24 Having reached the reaction time of 60 minutes (between 5%
25 and 20% of the total reaction time) to the aqueous solution in violent
26 reaction, the water taken away at the beginning of the loading is
27 missing, and such is compensated for by the reflux waters of the PVCS
28 separation.

1 In the meantime, in the first reactor the conclusive phase of
2 discharge of VMC vapours is reached; that is discharged into the third
3 reactor at the liquid state.

4 After the addition of the reflux waters, and reaching the central
5 part of polymerization phase, one proceeds to the addition of VCM
6 coming from the other reactor.

7 Advantageously therefore, after or during the addition of the
8 reflux waters, one proceeds to the addition of the VCM coming from the
9 other reactor, after its reaction has ended.

10 These and other advantages will appear from the subsequent
11 description of a preferential solution with the help of the included
12 drawings the execution details of which of are not to be considered
13 limitative but only given as an example.

14 Figure 1 is a schematic view of the plant according to the present
15 invention.

16 Referring to the figures it is noticed that with 1 and 2 the
17 reactors interconnected from tank 3 are indicated, that may
18 preferably also be a third mini-reactor to polymerize or stop VCM
19 monomer in case of emergency or necessity (for example imminent
20 danger of opening of security valves of main reactors 1 and/or 2.)

21 With 12-22 the VCM monomer is indicated at the gaseous state in
22 main reactors 1,2.

23 With 11 and 21 the PVCS aqueous suspension is indicated
24 together with VMC liquid monomer in main reactors 1,2.

25 With 4 and 5 the head capacitors of reactors 1 and 2 are
26 indicated.

27 With 6 the reflux water loading lines of PVCS separation are
28 indicated.

1 With 7 the unloading of PVCS in aqueous suspension from the
2 reactors is indicated.

3 With 8 the filtration device for separation of PVCS from the
4 water and the recircling of the water to reactors 1 and 2 is indicated,
5 according to the described and claimed method, or after a certain
6 period of time from the respective reaction starting phases.

7 Obviously filtration system 8 will operate alternatively from one
8 on to the other of the two reactors 1,2, in such a way that, in the
9 continuous cycle, when a reactor has completed its polymerization,
10 and the PVCS product + water has been unloaded and filtered, etc., the
11 reflux water is loaded on the other that is already in an advanced
12 reaction phase, and vice versa.

1 CLAIMS

- 2 1. Method for Polyvinylchloride production in aqueous suspension
3 with recovery of refluxes, that provides for the use of a plant for
4 Polyvinylchloride production that has at least one reactor to
5 transform the vinyl chloride monomer into Polyvinylchloride in
6 aqueous suspension and vinyl chloride monomer wastes into the
7 gaseous state, and to separate at least one part of the water from the
8 aqueous Polyvinylchloride suspension, as reflux water, characterized
9 by the fact that said reflux water is recycled in the reactor/s in
10 polymerization phase.
- 11 2. A plant for the polyvinylchloride production, using a method
12 according to claim 1., of the type in which it uses at least one reactor
13 to transform the vinyl chloride monomer into polyvinylchloride in
14 aqueous suspension and vinyl chloride monomer wastes into the
15 gaseous state, and separate at least one part of the water from the
16 aqueous polyvinylchloride suspension, as reflux water, characterized
17 by the fact that this plant includes at least two reactors (1. 2)
18 interconnected one with the other (3).
- 19 3. Method as claimed in claim 1., using a plant according claim 2.
20 characterized by the fact that said reflux water is loaded into the main
21 polymerizing reactors, during the polymerizing process.
- 22 4. Method according to preceding claims, characterized by the fact that
23 while a reactor is still, its reflux waters (8) is loaded into the other one
24 that is in reaction phase.
- 25 5. Method according to preceding claims, characterized by the fact that
26 the plant operates in order that un-reacted vinyl chloride monomer in
27 one of the two reactors (1 or 2), after liquefaction, is transferred (3) to
28 the second reactor (2 or 1), this already being in reaction phase.

- 1 6. Method according to preceding claims, using a plant according to
2 claim 2, characterized by the fact that the two reactors are started at
3 times staggered one from the other.
- 4 7. Method according to preceding claims, using a plant according to
5 claim 2, characterized by the fact that the two reactors are started at
6 times staggered one from the other, of a time comprised between 30
7 and 70% of total reaction time.
- 8 8. Method according to preceding claims, using a plant according to
9 claim 2, characterized by the fact that at the beginning of loading, the
10 main reactor is loaded with a smaller amount of water when compared
11 to the traditional formulations, in order to absolutely provide a
12 necessity of further water addition during process.
- 13 9. Method according to claim 1, using a plant according to claim 2,
14 characterized by the fact that the lack of water in load is lower than
15 40%-70% preferably 60% of the initial load for selfsufficiency.
- 16 10. Method according to claim 1, characterized by the fact that when
17 reaction time comprised between 5% and 20% of total reaction time is
18 reached, the missing water is supplied by means of reflux waters
19 obtained by PVCS separation process.
- 20 11. Method according to claim 1, using a plant according to claim 2,
21 characterized by the fact that after or during the addition of reflux
22 waters, one proceeds to VMC addition coming from the other reactor,
23 after the end of its reaction.
- 24 12. Plant according to previous claims, characterized by the fact that it
25 has an intermediate lung container (3) as interconnection element
26 between the two said reactors (1,2).
- 27 13. Plant according to preceding claims, characterized by the fact that
28 it has an intermediate lung reactor (3), as interconnection element

- 1 between the two said reactors (1,2) and of the same type.
- 2 14. Plant according to preceding claims, characterized by the fact that
3 it has an intermediate container or intermediate lung reactor (3), as
4 interconnection element between the two said reactors (1,2) that
5 connects the upper peaks of the same for parking and subsequent
6 transfer at the right moment the respective gases developed from one
7 reactor to another (12,22), after at least partial condensation (4,5).
- 8 15. Plant according to preceding claims, characterized by the fact that
9 the said interconnection element between the two said reactors (1,2),
10 also includes a separating recirculating device of Polyvinylchloride in
11 aqueous suspension and water (8), in order to recirculate it from one
12 on to the other of the two main reactors (1,2).

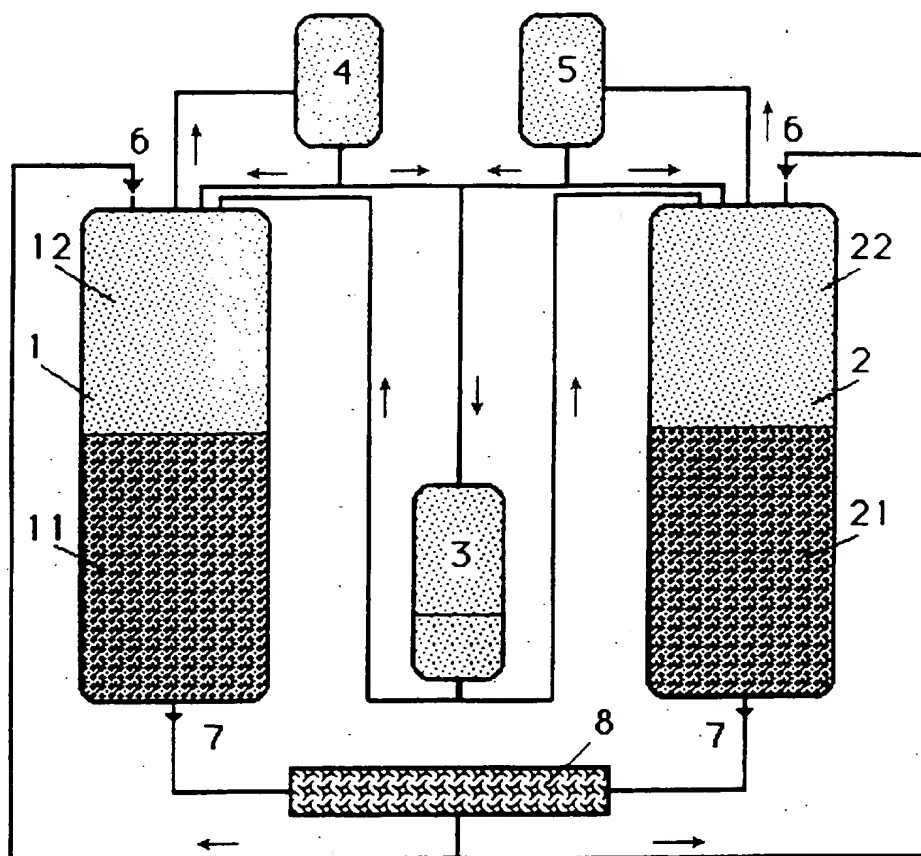


FIG.1

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat. Application No
PCT/IT 95/00209

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

C 08 F 6/24, 114/06

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC ⁶

D. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

C 08 F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	DE, C, 2 521 780 (HOECHST AG) 21 October 1982 (21.10.82), claims 1,11; example 1; column 6, lines 38-41; fig..	1, 2
A	DE, C, 2 759 097 (NORSK HYDRO) 05 March 1987 (05.03.87), claims 1,2.	1
A	DE, A, 2 832 972 (WACKER-CHEMIE GMBH) 07 February 1980 (07.02.80), claim 1.	1

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☐ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *A* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search
11 March 1996

Date of mailing of the international search report
03.04.96

Name and mailing address of the ISA
European Patent Office, P.O. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+ 31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax (+ 31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer
PUSTERER e.h.

zum internationalen Recherchen-
bericht über die internationale
Patentanmeldung Nr.

to the International Search
Report to the International Patent
Application No.

au rapport de recherche inter-
national relatif à la demande de brevet
international n°

This Annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are given merely for the purpose of information.

La présente annexe indique les
mémoires de la famille de brevets
relatifs aux documents de brevets cités
dans le rapport de recherche inter-
national visée ci-dessus. Les renseigne-
ments fournis sont donnés à titre indica-
tif et n'engagent pas la responsabilité
de l'Office.

[illegible]